



ASSEMBLYMEMBER NICOLE PARRA

Representing the 30th Assembly District



Parra Notes

June 30, 2006

Hello Friends:

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHT

Well, the highlight of my week and of the legislature's week is that we passed a great **state budget** that does a lot of good things for the **Central Valley**.

This is a very positive, **bi-partisan budget** that contains a lot of pluses for the **Central Valley**. All along the budget process, there were obstacles to overcome, funding that had to be fought for, but the Valley came out ahead. I am proud to have led the fight to attain a significant funding boost for **Valley Fever**, the **Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley**, efforts to fight **West Nile Virus**, **high speed rail**, and **programs to battle methamphetamine production**.

I would also like to applaud my colleagues in the **Senate** and the **Assembly** for really taking a close look at the problems facing the Valley and responding accordingly with their support for this budget. I feel strongly that the **Governor** will be pleased with this budget and that he will retain all the funding proposals for the Valley. All in all, we came out ahead, but the work does not stop here or now. I will continue my work on behalf of my Central Valley constituents, and I hope to usher in even more successes in the future.

I am proud to have won inclusion of the following Central Valley items in this year's \$130.9 billion budget by:

- Making a formal Member's request of **\$1 million to address the funding of the Valley Fever Vaccine Project**, to fund Department of Health Services efforts to mitigate the effects of Valley Fever, including research and development activities for a vaccine;
- Working with legislative leadership and the Valley delegation to secure **\$5 million for the Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley** that will go toward the implementation of the strategic action plan and a local grant program for the region;
- Communicating with and urging **Governor Schwarzenegger** to include **funding to combat the West Nile Virus**, an action which led to the inclusion of **\$9 million for mosquito abatement programs**;
- Staying the course with the state's high speed rail goals by working to obtain **\$13 million to continue advancing the state's high speed rail project**;
- Fighting for the inclusion of **\$6.5 million and 29.6 new positions for the California Methamphetamine Strategy (CALMS) Program**, a move that results in additional funding and ten positions (one-third of the 29.6) to be stationed in Fresno; and

- Advocating for and succeeding in ensuring all **Central Valley counties can more directly apply for funds as part of a \$20 million augmentation to the War on Methamphetamine Grant program.**

Other key highlights of the budget, to help Valley residents, include:

- The **reduction of community college student fees** from \$26 to \$20 per unit effective in the spring of 2007;
- The approval of **\$75 million to buy out fee increases for all CSU and UC students** – all fees will remain at current year level; and
- An appropriation of **\$45 million for the pass-through of the 2.3% federal Cost of Living Adjustment for the SSI portion of the SSI/SSP program** on January 1, 2007.

NOW, TO THE REST OF MY WEEK IN SACRAMENTO

At the beginning of the week, in anticipation of June 27th, which is **National HIV Testing Day**, I joined **Assemblywomen Bonnie Garcia and Cindy Montañez** to stress the importance of **getting tested for HIV/AIDS**.

It is so important that everyone, but especially women, take the time to get tested. I would like to especially encourage **Latinas** to take precautions and sign up for a test, because the female Latino population has been hard hit by HIV and AIDS. The bottom line is that you can never be too careful.

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** reported in 2003, heterosexual women accounted for a staggering 26% of all new cases, with **African American and Hispanic women** accounting for 83% of these diagnoses. Heterosexual sex has been the primary method of HIV exposure for women, with a growing number becoming infected by male partners who had sex with males or sex with needle-sharers.

There are many reasons why fewer women seek care – especially in communities where social and cultural norms may discourage women from speaking out about their sexuality. In some cultures, the promiscuous behavior of male partners is ignored, and in others, seeking assistance brings fear of being stigmatized. As a result, women fail to recognize the early symptoms of **HIV/AIDS** and avoid raising questions – even with their doctors.

I really wanted to take the opportunity offered by **National HIV Testing Day** to urge women across California to visit their doctor or any clinic providing testing. With Rapid HIV testing, it is now possible to receive results in about 20 minutes.

Additional information on **National HIV Testing Day** can be found at www.hivtest.org.

Now, besides working on the budget this week and promoting **HIV/AIDS awareness**, a large part of my time was directed at presenting a number of my bills in their respective **Senate Committees**.

To start off the week, **my identity theft legislation, AB 2333**, passed from the **Senate Committee on Public Safety** by a vote of 6-0.

This crime is a gross violation of personal privacy that cannot be tolerated. It is imperative that we do all we can to defend people from these types of heinous acts. Tackling the crime of identity theft requires us to be pro-active, to think multiple steps ahead of perpetrators.

Existing law provides that every person who, with the intent to defraud, acquires, transfers, or retains

possession of the personal identifying information of another person is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for a period not to exceed one year, a fine not to exceed \$1,000 or a fine not to exceed \$1,500 if the person has been ordered to serve temporary military duty outside of the state, or by both that imprisonment and fine. **AB 2333** would also provide that every person who, with the intent to defraud, acquires, transfers, or retains possession of the personal identifying information of 10 or more other persons is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for 16 months, or 2 or 3 years, or by imprisonment in a county jail for a period not to exceed one year, or by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, or by both imprisonment and fine. Because **AB 2333** would create a new crime, it would impose a state-mandated, local program. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Identity theft is a rapidly growing problem throughout the State of California. Nationwide, the Federal Trade Commission reported 43,839 victims of ID theft in 2004, with an average amount paid of \$1,455 in damages. **Those numbers rank California 3rd in the nation** in identity theft victims, on a per capita basis.

AB 2333 is supported by the **California District Attorneys Association**, the **California Credit Union League**, the **California Narcotic Officers' Association**, and the **Coalition for Quality Credit Counseling**.

AB 2333 now moves on to the **Senate Appropriations Committee** for additional consideration.

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I also secured the passage of **AB 2143** after presenting the bill at a hearing of the **Senate Transportation and Housing Committee** – the measure passed by a vote of 9-3. **AB 2143** would change the designation of Highway 43 to an inter-regional and inter-county route under state transportation codes.

This bill brings some much needed assistance to Highway 43 that will go a long way toward alleviating some of the Valley's air quality and transportation concerns. I think this bill passing also shows that Sacramento is finally starting to realize that the Valley is a region in need.

According to the **California Air Resources Board**, the **San Joaquin Valley** has the worst level of air quality in the state. With population quickly growing in the **Central Valley** this problem will only amplify as traffic congestion swells. Aside from the potential health risks that will arise, industries offering high-priority jobs whose employees value a clean environment may hesitate from relocating to the **Central Valley**.

Existing law requires that certain transportation funds be made available for transportation capital improvement projects to be programmed and expended in specified amounts for interregional and regional improvements, including state highway routes that are included in the interregional road system. **AB 2143** would include **State Highway Route 43**, which runs through the counties of Kings, Kern, Fresno and Tulare, as an eligible interregional and inter-county route. This would allow for highway improvements that would relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality in the Central Valley.

AB 2143 is sponsored by the **Kings County Association of Governments** and supported by the **Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors of California (CELSOC)**.

AB 2143 will next be heard in the **Senate Appropriations Committee**.

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Toward the end of the week, we got a **fantastic win for education** with **AB 2045** receiving overwhelming support during a hearing of the **Senate Education Committee**, as it passed by a vote of

10-0.

Our students cannot learn unless we provide them with an environment that is conducive to learning. Part of creating that learning environment is making sure children have access to the best possible school facilities, and this bill makes that access possible.

Under current law, the State Allocation Board provides funding to school districts for the construction and modernization of school facilities, and any funding appropriated is considered final. In other words, school districts cannot currently petition for additional monies if their costs are greater than expected. **AB 2045** would establish an exception that would authorize the State Allocation Board to approve a supplemental apportionment of up to 5% of the cost of a project in order to ensure that all minimum essential facilities, as defined, are included in the project. This bill allows the State Allocation Board to approve the supplemental apportionment if it determines that the apportionment would cover cost increases that are beyond the control of the school district. **AB 2045** also would require a school district to retain in the county fund any savings achieved by the efficient and prudent expenditure of specified school facilities funds, for expenditure by the district for other high priority capital outlay purposes.

AB 2045 is co-sponsored by the **Kern County Superintendent of Schools** and the **Small School Districts' Association**. This bill is also supported by the **California Association of School Business Officials**, the **Central Valley Education Coalition**, and the **Los Banos Unified School District**.

AB 2045 now moves to the **Senate Appropriations Committee**.

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One other bill that is very near and dear to my heart took another step toward becoming law, when it made it out of its committee. **AB 2085** passed out of the **Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee** by a vote of 7-0. **AB 2085** lowers the qualifying income threshold that must be met for California National Guard members to receive a grant from the **Military Families Relief Fund**.

So many of our **National Guard** members have been away from their families since the beginning of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. For all the sacrifices they make, I think we need to show them that we care and that we appreciate what they do for us all. **AB 2085** is all about offering a helping hand to the brave men and women of the California National Guard.

Existing law requires that a member applying for assistance from this fund meet all of the following criteria: membership in the **California National Guard**; residency in California; 100 consecutive days of deployment; and a 30% drop from civilian income. To date the fund has accumulated over \$400,000, yet only a small number of grants totaling less than \$15,000.00 have been distributed. This is attributed to the very stringent eligibility criteria that were included in the original legislation. **AB 2085** addresses the most stringent of the criteria by changing the required drop in income from 30% to 10%. Figures show that, over the last year, more than 90% of National Guard applicants, who would otherwise be eligible to receive these funds, were turned away because of the excessive income requirement.

AB 2085, which is also supported by **Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante**, will next be taken up by the **Senate Appropriations Committee**.

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Also this week, I am proud to announce that **Governor Schwarzenegger** has announced his endorsement of and strong support for **ACA 37**, my "**Victims' Bill of Rights**," at a press conference held in **Oakland**.

ACA 37 would establish, in the **California State Constitution**, one of the strongest "**Victims' Bill of Rights**" in the nation. By using current statutory provisions along with new measures that have already been enacted by other states the author has created a comprehensive "**Victim's Bill of**

Rights.” Some of the rights include:

- Ensure **basic rights such as a speedy trial**, promote restitution and respect throughout the process
- **Expand access to information beyond current law** by allowing access to documents such as trial transcripts and pre-sentence reports.
- **Expand the right to attend hearings and speak to the court** on key decisions such as pleas and sentences.
- **Grant victims expanded access to juvenile proceedings** and information
- **Give courts the option of requiring criminals to pay for victims costs** of attending the trial
- **Allow a victim standing in court to enforce his or her rights** or to have the District Attorney enforce those rights.

Historically, California has been a leader in advancement of **Victims Rights**. In 1965, **California became the first state to establish a victims’ compensation program**, in 1982 **California was the first state to enact a “Victims’ Bill of Rights”** and in 1990, the **state passed Prop. 8 which included a combination of constitutional and statutory changes that were intended to increase information sharing and diminish the need for victims to be subjected to the court process and the ability of the accused to delay proceedings**. In addition to these voter initiated measures, the California Legislature enacted numerous provisions over the years that grant victims of crime legal remedies in a variety of areas such as notification, restitution and victim participation.

I look forward to working with the **Schwarzenegger Administration** in continuing to build on California’s strong tradition of fighting for victims of crime and making **ACA 37** a reality.

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In closing, I would like to let everyone know that **I will be spending the next few weeks working completely in the District**. So, please do not hesitate to give me a **call or even to stop by my Hanford or Bakersfield District Offices**.

I hope everyone has a terrific Fourth of July weekend. Please always remember to be safe and responsible.

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HELPFUL LINKS

Operation Hero Miles

<http://www.heromiles.org/>

Care Packages for Soldiers

<http://anysoldier.com/>

County Information:

Fresno

<http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/portal/>

Kings

<http://www.countyofkings.com/>

Kern

<http://www.co.kern.ca.us/>

Tulare

<http://www.co.tulare.ca.us/>

City Information:

Coalinga

www.coalinga.com

Kingsburg

www.cityofkingsburg-ca.gov/

Huron

www.fresnocog.org/city1/city_of_huron.htm

Avenal

<http://www.avenalcalifornia.com/>

Corcoran
<http://www.cityofcorcoran.com/>

Hanford
<http://www.ci.hanford.ca.us/>

Lemoore
<http://www.lemoore.com/>
Bakersfield
<http://www.bakersfieldcity.us/>
McFarland
<http://www.mcfarlandcity.org/>
Wasco
<http://www.ci.wasco.ca.us/>

Arvin
<http://www.arvin.org/>
Delano
<http://www.delano-ca.org/default.htm>
Shafter
<http://www.shafter.com/>

NEED HOMEWORK HELP?

The **California State Library** has made available through their website a new service called **Live Homework Help**. This service enables students to connect on-line with a tutor for assistance with homework questions. Supported by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal funding, students can access Live Homework Help through [28 California public libraries](#). It is important to note that the tutors who respond to student questions are screened, trained, and closely monitored.

Live Homework Help is easy! Log on to <http://www.library.ca.gov/tutor/> from your computer any time between 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. and follow the simple setup instructions.

MEETING REQUESTS

If you or your organization would like to set up a time to meet with me or would like for me to attend an event you are sponsoring, please feel free to contact my **Executive Secretary Anna Goddard** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at Anna.Goddard@asm.ca.gov.

INTERNS WANTED

I am accepting applications for the internship program in my **Hanford, Bakersfield** and **Sacramento** offices. Candidates should be residents of the **30th Assembly District**, possess solid research and communication skills, and have a strong interest in public policy and political issues facing the **Central Valley**. Applications can be found by going to:
<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a30>.

For Hanford office internships contact **Richard Valle** at (559) 585-7170 or by e-mail at Richard.Valle@asm.ca.gov.

For Bakersfield office internships contact **Paula DeLaRiva** at (661) 334-3745 or by e-mail at Paula.DeLaRiva@asm.ca.gov.

For Sacramento office internships contact **Brandon Sanders** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at Brandon.Sanders@asm.ca.gov.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1097 - The Crusaders defeated the Turks at Dorylaeum.

1894 - Korea declared independence from China and asked for Japanese aid.

1913 - Fighting broke out between Bulgaria and Greece and Spain. It was the beginning of the Second Balkan War.

1951 - On orders from Washington, General Matthew Ridgeway broadcasts that the United Nations was willing to discuss an armistice with North Korea.

1953 - The first Corvette rolled off the Chevrolet assembly line in Flint, MI. It sold for \$3,250.

1958 - The U.S. Congress passed a law authorizing the admission of Alaska as the 49th state in the Union.

1962 - Los Angeles Dodger Sandy Koufax pitched his first no-hitter in a game with the New York Mets.

- 1971** - The Soviet spacecraft Soyuz 11 returned to Earth. The three cosmonauts were found dead inside.
- 1998** - Officials confirmed that the remains of a Vietnam War serviceman buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at Arlington National Cemetery, were identified as those of Air Force pilot Michael J. Blassie.

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